L83-567.10.1

Miss M. E. Paine

June 30, 1884

Royalston, Mass.,
June 30, 1884.

Wm. Brewster, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

Your letter of May 18 and your gift of a skin of the male Cardinal Grosbeak have both been received. I thank you for both and for the delicate and thoughtful courtesy which changed, what would have been quite a disappointment, into a rare pleasure. It was a case where, certainly, no responsibility rested upon you; and I really hardly feel justified, in allowing you to replace the loss of the other bird. I trust you will understand how very much pleased I was, with both the letter and the bird, and that at some future day I may be able to make some slight amends, for the trouble I have caused you. It seems a good deal to take for one of whom you

the pasture, this spring, to a mowing near barn. It paid no attention to a flock of hens quite near; but swept around to a flock of Bobolinks & Sparrows. It was early morning. The black spots on under side of the wing, we all noticed. Except those, the wing seemed white. I saw another kind in the woods, perhaps larger; under side of wings were evenly marked, no large black spots; made me think of the lining to a Barred Owl's wings. White above, near base of tail; & I think some white by the under tail coverts. More brownish than the other one in color. Do not think it the size of the Red-tailed. Should you think it might be the Red-shouldered? It was in the spring, May, I think. I cannot say it was a Hawk. But think so. Never saw an Owl fly, so do not know how they look. The time was middle of forenoon, sunny, quite warm. It sailed around, coming down to watch me.

Could you tell me, what

never heard, until you received my note, the other day.

The bird is beautiful every way - in color and shape - and the skin is so well made, it is a pleasure to look at it. I am exceedingly choice of it. It is the finest one I have. I have one other, which I think as well made, an English Sparrow, made for me last year by some one, whose name I am sorry to say I do not know. I thank you for stating that the skin was shot and prepared by yourself. The fact, of course, could not fail to enhance its value.

And, now, may I trouble you, with a few queries? Last year, I was sitting at the end of quite a long upland knoll, divided for a third of the way across by a low tumbled down fence. The knoll sloped to an orchard in a hollow & to a bit of marsh hollow, where were flags & coarse grasses, & frogs. The other way, it sloped off toward a pasture, with pine woods. Some large bird, which I think a Hawk, came from the pasture way and flew around, just over the tops of the grasses, quite at swiftly. It went two or three times, around the length of the long knoll, its course making an ellipse in form. When it came to the fence, it would just lift itself lightly over & then drop low down on the other side. Color seemed more gray, or light, than brown; & the wings underneath white; with large black spots, quite noticeable. Wings long & pointed, beautiful. It was the most beautiful thing in flight, I ever saw, or that I ever expect to see. It was simply perfection. The sunshine was brilliant, near noon. I should think it might be in June, late. I am unused to estimating the stretch of wings, in large birds in flight. I incline to think it a Cooper's Hawk, Accipiter Cooperi. But I have never seen one, nor a wing. It might be larger, but was not size of a Red-tailed. I think the same species of bird, swept up from

and by the limbs of an evergreen tree, a bird I called a small Hawk, flew over and alighted on the limb of the same tree, a yard or two from the Thrush. Neither paid any attention to the other, the Thrush going on, with preening her feathers. The Hawk sat perfectly still, until I moved. Unfortunately, I could see only the head & neck. Slaty-blue on top of head; & some white & black on sides of head. I thought, when I had seen a picture of the head of a Sparrow Hawk & read the description, it might be that. From the head, I should have thought it larger; more the size of a Blue Jay. But I could not see the body. Should I be apt to see a Sparrow Hawk, in middle of day, May 26, 1883. It flew off low, a yard or two from the ground, among the branches of trees, with some swiftness.

I trust you will excuse this multiplicity of questions. The probability is that, from the indefiniteness sort of a small bird I should be apt to see, in low woodland by a river side, a few days ago. A Thrush, having young, cried out; and this came with Chickadees, Vireos, Redeyed, Water Thrush, &c. Head conspicuously striped black & white or very light gray; - the bird was I think nearly or quite those two colors; - two broad bars of white on wings & perhaps white edging. I saw no yellow, or red, or blue, anywhere about it. It hardly seemed as large as a Chickadee - but might have been. I could not say it was not a black-& white Creeper. I hardly thought it that.

Another, seen in midsummer & later, acted like a Chickadee or Black & white Creeper, but was smaller; color above was olive-green, perhaps like nestlings of Red-eyed Vireo; no wing bars, & the same color every where above, I thought, with no marks. Underneath delicate-yellow, unmarked, except perhaps under tail coverts - I thought it not yellow there, a light

While I stood watching it, it would drop down, clinging with its feet to the same place on the bough, & hang head down, the under parts being toward me instead of the back, as when it sat on the limb. It seemed to be picking insects. Was as tame as a Chickadee, letting me come within two or three yards. It was the smallest bird, I think I know, except a Humming Bird. I saw it both times in midsummer, once after baying, on apple-trees. The only other bird I know off that it made me think off, in color, was the female Maryland Yellow-Throat. I do not think that would act so. This bird was very slender & very brim. I do not know any birds, except the Red-eyed.

I saw a Warbler, I cannot seem to identify. Might if I could see it again. The color above, wings & tail, was the same, or nearly, unmarked; no wing bars. A little place just above the bill was different. But the color of the back extended up on the crown & down on the front of the head a little. I think there was a narrow black line where the two colors joined. Near the bill was not black. Underneath bright yellow chin, throat, breast. Breast boldly striped with black or very dark stripes ||||| , something like this only longer; but they were even at the top & widest at the top. The throat & chin unmarked, rich yellow. The bird was quite tame. On an apple-tree, in edge of an upland piece; near a clump of alders, or swampy land. I do you not think you can name it, from such a description. But it is the best I can give, until I can see it again. I saw it, in late spring or early summer, only once. I did not think the color like a Maryland Yellow-Throat. Should think it dark olive-green or an inclination to slaty, rather than yellow, it seemed.

One day, watching a Thrush, probably Wilson's, which was partly hid, by a fence rail,

letter, with its endless questions. If you are too busy to answer the questions, as to the birds, do not feel obliged to. I shall learn some day; and I am used to waiting. Thanking you once more, for all your kindness, I remain as ever,

Yours Very Respectfully,
M. E. Paine.

Address,

Miss M. E. Paine,
Royalston, Mass.

P. S.

Would you have the kindness to tell me if the C. J. Maynards are home, from the South. Also, if Miss Barrett who has been in their employ, has left the store. She is from this vicinity. But I do not wish now, or at any other time, she should know that I have written you, or that I obtain skins from you. I have reasons, for asking this, which are quite weighty. Or I would not trouble you, by mentioning it. Mrs. Maynard always sent us such beautiful specimens from the store. It was a treat to see what she left the store.

of the descriptions, you will not be able to identify any of them. But, if you can and would have the kindness to tell me some time, when you have a little leisure, what any of them are, I should be very grateful. There is no doubt that all of them are common enough birds. For I am able to identify, only about sixty birds living. Nearly every one of those are, doubtless, very common birds. Should you think it probable that I might have seen the Blue Grosbeak, in the spring of 1882, in this town. Brilliant blue above & below, some black on wings & tail, size of our Bluebird, perhaps larger than Indigo Bird, much more brilliant. Never saw it only those two or three days, that year. It might have some other color above. I looked up at it from below, while it was perching on trees, not leaves. Then saw it quite plain fly. But saw no other color, except black on wings & tail.

You see the trouble is I

do not have the specimens in my hand. There is, for the most part, an objection to having them shot. And, until I can learn how to prepare the skins for the cabinet, I do not care to shoot have them shot myself. As to cabinet specimens, there are very few any where in the vicinity. The most of those not remarkably good. The only way seems to be to purchase skins, as fast as one is able, & to study the birds out of doors, if they will be quiet long enough to be identified.

The Thrushes, Wilson, Hermit, Olive-backed, & Wood, all puzzle me, notwithstanding the plain descriptions of the book. I simply cannot tell. I do not think I know the Hermit & Wood. I think I know the Wilson; & possibly, the Olive-backed this spring. I called it Tawny. I do not know what their tawny color is. I do not am sure a ring around the eye. Was all one color above. I came within two yards. I have concluded to have a skin of each, as soon as I can. Would you tell me how much you would sell a skin, of each of the four kinds for. Should wish them good skins, of your own make. Else I should rather wait, until you could secure them for me. Do you ever exchange skins of your own make, for first-class eggs? Or would you to accommodate? I have a few eggs, well-blown, very nice in every way, as far as I can judge, which I could spare; they are blown with drill & blow-fife, well cleansed. If you thought you would exchange, I could send what I have to you and you could return the whatever you thought you could allow me for them. I am used to parking them, to some extent. It would not make so very much difference what skins I had, such as I should see here; and I should wish them good skins of your own make. I should be particular about that.

You will excuse this long

have to conclude I did not see. What I did see was extremely beautiful. I do not believe it could be an Indigo bird. I did not see the black on the wings & tail. The lady who was with me said there was as it flew. But I did see it three times, very plainly, looking up at it. It seemed all blue, throat, breast, &c, as I looked up. I cannot find any such bird in the descriptions. When it flew, it dropped above down from above my head & flew low in the shelter of birches, not over a yard high, less perhaps, crossed the lane, some distance from us, & still flew low, down a side hill moving quite a distance, before there was shelter. It was a much more beautiful blue than any Indigo bird I ever saw, not dark nor pale. I have seen the sky that color, on very rare afternoons in October it is the loveliest most perfect blue one can imagine. Well, I do not seem to be

Royalston, Mass.,
August 19, 1884.

Mr. William Brewster,

Dear Sir,

Your letter from N. H., kindly identifying several species of birds for me, has been received. I thank you very much, for your kindness. It is always a pleasure to me to be able to identify a bird, when my attention has been called to it. And I was quite unable to do so, in these cases, until you aided me. One or two I should have, probably, been able to identify alone, in time.

In regard to the Hawk seen in the woods, I quite misled you, by using the common but not strictly accurate term, for the locality. I did not notice, until I received your letter. It was not a place of

high woods as you naturally thought; but a wooded section, young trees and brush, with blackberry spaces, on a side hill, adjoining a somewhat extensive swampy section on the west and high woods on the north. The bird came up from the direction of the swamp, and was at first among the trees but about a yard from the ground, over a briery space. Seeing me, it rose higher and moved around watching me, - some distance above my head. It did not alight anywhere. And the flight, while perhaps less swift, was I think not unlike the one on the upland knoll and hill-side. Although, the color was so different, it did not occur to me to put the two flights together, until you suggested what the first might be. I think with the added explanation, which I have given, you will doubtless infer it was the bird which you thought, the female Marsh Hawk. I should not have ascertained unaided. And I am very glad to know. For some reasons, the books did not make me understand that I should find the species, in the localities where I have seen it. Certainly, I should never have looked for it or expected to see it, sweeping around an upland knoll, in the full sunlight of almost high noon-tide, or flying up over a side-hill mowing, almost into the arms of myself and the children, in the early morning light. Seen thus, it is far the finest thing I have seen in Bird-life. I am pleased to be indebted to you, for the identification of what was artistically so perfect and which was and always will be to me such a beautiful memory.

The Blue Grosbeak, I shall

Miss M. E. Paine

Aug 19, 1884

be all the same - it is exceedingly kind of you and I thank you for the courtesy. But, while it would be fair, among equals in knowledge, to exchange thus, the trouble is the gain would be all on my side. I am afraid I should never be able to do anything for you - at least until I have learned much more. However, I should be glad of the skins very glad - I could not afford too many or too costly ones - and you would be willing to let me purchase them as I should have to elsewhere or make it right in some way. If you ever have leisure, I should like much to know about your cabinet. Almost anything would interest me. Do you have it in rooms, glass cases, as public specimens are, or in close drawers? I should like to know how large, &c, &c, if it were not too much trouble. Or anything about the specimens.

Very Respectfully,

M. E. Paine

Address,

Miss M. E. Paine,

Royalston, Mass.

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able to come to a decision. But may find out, sometime, if ever I have the privilege of seeing a cabinet.

I am happy to say I have, at last, seen an adult Blue Yellow-backed Warbler, on the same beech where I saw the young birds last year. And, last week, Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Maynard sent a gift of bird-skins for my birth-day, and, among them, I found one of this species. I was quite pleased - for I did wish to see a skin very much. There was also a Black-throated Blue Warbler - I have searched for this living a long while, thus far without success. Now, I may be able to find it. And I made my first acquaintance with the female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Do you not think the under wing-coverts lovely? I could not name the shade, I am sorry to say. However, I had the pleasure of consulting authorities, & found Cover & Cleaves say

Saffron-yellow; & Maynard said Salmon. The latter conveyed a more correct idea to my mind. Have you still another term for the same shade? I wonder does Dr. Coues say Saffron-yellow, in his own books? So you see I have been learning a little, since I wrote my last-letter. In rather a lazy and not quite so enjoyable way, as from the living birds. I am glad though to see the skins. Last winter, a box of skins was in the neighborhood, a day or two. I saw them twice and made my first-acquaintance with the Finches that-way.

A bird flew up from under my feet, from a hedge with brown moss, not far from August 1, a Whippoorwill or Nighthawk, probably, by the colors. I should think the latter; — formerly but I thought there was white on the wings. If this bird the latter, I should think it would have flown higher. The flight was scarcely two feet high, along the middle of the road, several rods. It flew over the fence into the road. Also a young bird with yellow throat & tail-coverts, perhaps a Maryland Yellow-throat, — not very unlike the female adult. I thought, came into my kitchen, just at night, and alighted on the floor near a half-grown kitten. Some one said it flew in. Fortunately, for the bird's welfare, I was quite as quick-motioned, under the necessities of the case, as the kitten. The bill was I think brown above & lighter below.

I should like to inquire what the number on the Cardinal Grosbeak skin, which you sent me, stands for. Is it the number of the skin in your cabinet or the number you have collected? In regard to your offer to let me have some Thrush skins, if you had duplicates, I should be very glad to get some, if you could spare them. But, in regard to my being able, sometime, to get something you wished — if not it would

M. E. Paine

Jan. 15-1885

M. E. Paine.
May 9-1894.

Birds - Shore Birds. I know nothing of them. I had rather see them alive first - but do not know when I shall. Nor do I know a Woodcock - or the small Game birds - except the Ruffed Grouse. I write this that you may see that whatever it pleases you to send - scarcely any thing will come amiss. And if you happened to have them - I should be glad of wings - so that I could show her the linings. She is to learn the birds slowly one at time - and all I can teach of that one bird. I have some nests and eggs but no wings. I did have a few wings of Game birds - that a Western hunter sent me - and you would be surprised to know how very much I enjoyed them. I have never found a Woodcock nest - or a Night-hawk - or Whip-poor-will egg - nor do I know how the birds look close at hand. This little lady - her name is Gladys - has already discovered a hanging Vireo nest on my maple tree in

Boylston, Mass.,
November 6, 1894.

William Brewster, Esq.,
Cambridge, Mass.,

Dear Sir,

The little Green Bird, you kindly made into a skin for me, came safely to hand. I thank you for the kindness. It is all the skin I now have on hand. You were kind enough then to say if I would notify you in the autumn or early winter you would send me duplicate skins - that you had - for bird-study in the neighborhood & vicinity. The only trouble you said was to get time to select them for me.

Thus far I have been so busy that I have had little time to write. But having been on the sick list for a week, a little woman of six years, a near neighbor, has thought of the heft a bright fire would for me, she could come and sit by the lounge and have me teach her about birds. So we

have commenced with this one skin and are progressing famously. She says we can have a "Bird School" – it is her own phrase – and I think will please you as it has me. She can already tell the colors of the Oven-bird. And I have told her of its nest and eggs. But there it is only reporting from books – I have never found the nest myself – & never seen one. Perhaps some time you would send us nest & eggs – a set – a pair, & even a single egg. Many of mine are in pairs.

She knows a Robin, Crow, Blue Jay, Snow bird, Chickadee, Blue-bird &c – & thinks she does. In fact she declares she knows about every bird there is. And I must tell you how she came in yesterday, triumphant with an old Robin's nest in a tin pail, the nest drenched in the late storm and wanted I should give her a small pullet's egg to put in it. Very well, it is a small beginning – but she has begun right – and I shall make a bird scholar out of her. A friend here who lends to every one – took me to his cabinet of eggs and gave her a pullet egg as she desired – a blue bird egg & later a Chipping Sparrow nest & egg. And she is absolutely happy. So you see – your bird school is well under way. Now, I have thought if you had not time to make large selections for us, perhaps you could get time to select a few now – and, remembering us, some others at later times. In the long winter ahead – I should enjoy them sent in little lots by mail – if more convenient for you – and I could pay postage – when I knew the amount as well as expressage. As far as the beginners are concerned, I should like to show them – this little girl, for instance, there she thinks she knows – except the crow – I do not want a crow skin – I wish for to learn them out of doors and then have them near at hand. I hope I can get show her a Song Sparrow & a White-throated Sparrow. Then there are the Winter birds for her to learn – which I should like to show her close to – as she sees them. As for myself I should like to see a Snow Bunting near to. They are such beautiful birds in flight. I am very sorry I could not have had a chance this fall – to study Water-

the yard - and wishes to get it. I told her I could get her a nest in the woods or somewhere down down. I think of all the eggs I have ever had I enjoyed the most, those of the California Quail. Some day I am going to purchase some.

I have written you quite a long letter - so that you can see a little what perhaps might be needed for a beginning. But you will also see that - anything - even half a dozen songs - would be acceptable. I write to-day while there is leisure from work. Do not let me unduly hurry you - in sending your gift. Later or earlier it is sure to have a welcome - and will be used for "the diffusion of knowledge"; it will add pleasure and teach a few at least to enjoy the delights of an out-of-door life.

Very truly Yours
M. E. Paine.

P.O. Address
Box 73, Royalston
Express Office - Athol Mass.

Paine — Mo. E.

Nov. 6, 1894.